

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Americans in Paris: Negotiating Peace After Revolution

Standard:

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environment
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives:

The student will:

- Analyze the peacemaking process resulting in the Treaty of Paris (1783)
- Assess the roles played by significant negotiators
- Evaluate the specific achievements of Benjamin Franklin
- Determine the geographic boundaries of the United States established in the Treaty of Paris
- Examine the specific articles of the Treaty of Paris (1783)
- Establish primary documents' relevancy to the study of history

Time: 1–3 class periods

Materials:

Documents: **1782** *Notes of a Conversation Between Franklin & Oswald*
1782 *Benjamin Franklin's Peace Journal*
1782 *John Adams' Journal of the Peace Negotiations*
1783 *The Paris Peace Treaty, September 30, 1783*
1783 *Establishing Broad Relations*

Resources: *Signatories of the Treaty of Paris*
Map: Boundaries of the United States after the Treaty of Paris
Images: American Peace Commissioners in 1783

Exercises: *Negotiating a Peace*
Behind the Scenes: Treaty of Paris 1783 (with answer key)

Procedures:

1. Ask students what images, achievements, and facts come to mind with the name, Benjamin Franklin. Compile a list. Does anyone volunteer the term, **Diplomat**, or mention Franklin's life in France while courting France as an ally or his role in negotiating the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 between England and the new United States? Whether yes or no, regard this information as an introduction to documents that highlight Franklin's diplomatic skills.

2. Display this statement:

Scholar Leo Lemay called Franklin "the most essential and successful American diplomat of all time."

Explain to students that they will examine information to determine if Lemay exaggerated or had grounds for his assessment.

3. Distribute copies of these documents to students:

- *Notes of Conversation between Benjamin Franklin & Richard Oswald*
- *Benjamin Franklin's Peace Journal*

Refer to *Key Players: Section I, Revolutionary Era* for descriptions of individuals mentioned in these documents. Share information with students.

4. Provide students with the topic: *Benjamin Franklin: Diplomat Extraordinaire* and answer the following questions as they read the documents.

- a. Identify skills exhibited by Franklin while dealing with other diplomats.
- b. How did he facilitate encounters and meetings between the English and French?
- c. Describe one of the encounters included in Franklin's Peace Journal and explain its significance.
- d. Describe Franklin's style of diplomacy.

5. Provide short biographies about Benjamin Franklin to students for reading OR supply information via lecture.

- http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_world_france.html
- http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_citizen_founding.html

Discuss with students:

- a. How does this information compare and contrast with answers based solely on the documents?
- b. Franklin could be called a "salon superstar" during the nine years he spent in France. What was a salon in the 18th century? How was this a unique (compared to today) style of diplomacy?
- c. What skills made Franklin a perfect fit while negotiating during the Revolution and during the peace process?
- d. What were his most significant decisions?
- e. Validate the statement from Procedure #2 calling Franklin "the most essential and successful American diplomat of all time." Use information gathered from documents and biographies.
- f. If Benjamin Franklin was a diplomat today, what assignment would you give him? Where would you send him? What issue(s) would you have him attempt to resolve?

6. Continue to use the previous documents. Add to them, *John Adams' Journal of the Peace Negotiations*.

7. Distribute copies of the handout, *Negotiating a Peace*. Have students determine how the issues/items were addressed by the Americans, French, and British. Explain that information might not be discernible for all groups.

Note: It is important for students to realize that during these negotiations, the British and Americans decided to exclude France from the final peace negotiations and treaty. Be prepared to explain this turn of events.

- a. Compare and contrast the information collected by students.

- b.** Which issue(s) appeared to be most contentious?
 - c.** Classify each issue as primarily economic, political, or both. Explain.
- 8.** Provide copies of the *Treaty of Paris, 1783*. Using the same handout, *Negotiating a Peace*, have students complete the final column.
 - a.** How were the issues during negotiations resolved by the Treaty?
 - b.** Were any issues omitted?
 - c.** Were new issues introduced in the treaty?
 - d.** Which issues would be most important to the states based on their location? (Southern, Middle Atlantic, Northern)
 - e.** Describe issues that appear more fragile and open to further dissension?
- 9.** Examine the actual last page of the Treaty (*Signatories of the Treaty of Paris*). Who signed for Great Britain? For the United States? How did the Americans decide to arrange their signatures? What are the red items affixed to the Treaty? Why were they used?
- 10.** Distribute copies of *Behind the Scenes: Treaty of Paris, 1783*. Have students read the quotes and match with the delegates involved in the Treaty of Paris. An Answer Key is provided. They can refer to the documents listed in the activity.
 - a.** Review students' answers.
 - b.** Which quotes were particularly difficult to match?
 - c.** Could the students at least identify the national origin of each speaker?
 - d.** What are the primary concerns voiced by the delegates?
 - e.** The American delegates possessed a harmonious and united presence in Paris. What evidence from the quotes supports this statement?
- 11.** Refer students to the document, *Establishing Broad Relations*.

Note: Benjamin Franklin was the "go-to" diplomat for the United States. Immediately following the signing of the Treaty, he was approached by members of the international community. Imagine the flurry of activity surrounding him.

 - a.** Identify the nations involved in the diplomatic contacts with the new United States.
 - b.** What are the issues Benjamin Franklin must handle?
 - c.** Categorize the issues based on the difficulty for Franklin to accomplish. Label them from most to least significant.

Extension Activities:

1. Distribute copies of the handout, *Map of the United States after the Treaty of Paris, 1783*. The Treaty includes a description of the new boundaries for the United States. Have students draw a red line following the specific places (as closely as possible) named in the Treaty. Identify the countries still retaining possession of lands to the north, south, and west.
2. Provide students with the painting, *The American Peace Commissioners*.
 - a. What occasion is commemorated with this painting? (The September 3, 1783 signing of the Treaty of Paris)
 - b. Share information about Benjamin West with students. (See Key Players: Section I, Revolutionary Era.)
 - c. Sitting in the painting, from left to right, John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, William Temple Franklin. Based on information gathered in previous activities, explain the roles played by each of these men. William Temple Franklin, Benjamin's grandson, served as secretary to the American delegation.
 - d. The British delegates, Richard Oswald and his replacement, David Hartley refused to pose for the painting. West left it unfinished.
 - e. Have students imagine that the American and British delegates are in the room to pose for the painting. Mr. Oswald and Mr. Hartley have decided they will leave and not pose. Create a brief conversation among all of the delegates. What reasons would Oswald and Hartley give for their exit. ■